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Paper # 12

D. DOAK HORNE
c/o GOWLING LAFLEUR HENDERSON
SUITE 1400
700 - 2ND STREET S.W.
CALGARY AB T2P 4V5 CA CANADA

COPY MAILED

APR 27 2005

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

ON PETITION

In re Application of
Thomas Stockmann
Application No.09/873,243
Filed: June 5, 2001
Attorney Docket Number: A882688US
Title of Invention: HYDRAULIC PLATFORM
LIFT INCORPORATING POSITIVE
DISPLACEMENT VALVE, AND POSITIVE
DISPLACEMENT VALVE FOR HYDRAULIC
PLATFORM LIFT

This is a decision on the petition filed November 12, 2003, under 37 CFR 1.137(a) to revive the above-identified application.

The petition to revive under 37 CFR § 1.137(a) is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration must be submitted within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR § 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR § 1.137(a)." This is **not** a final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 704.

This above-identified application became abandoned for failure to timely file a complete reply to the non-final Office Action of October 1, 2002. A Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment (37 CFR 1.121) was mailed on February 21, 2003 which set an extendable reply period of one month. This application became abandoned on March 22, 2003. A Notice of Abandonment was mailed on September 24, 2003. A petition filed under 37 CFR 1.181 requesting Supervisory Review was dismissed on November 5, 2004.

PETITION TO REVIVE UNDER 37 CFR § 1.137(a)

A grantable petition under 37 CFR § 1.137(a) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the required reply,¹
- (2) the petition fee,
- (3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Director that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to this paragraph was unavoidable, and
- (4) a terminal disclaimer and fee if the application was filed on or before June 8, 1995 or if the application is a design application.

The instant petition lacks items (3).

As to item (3), the showing of record is not sufficient to establish to the satisfaction of the Director that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 37 CFR §1.137(a).

The Office may revive an abandoned application if the delay in responding to the relevant outstanding office requirement is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." See, 37 CFR § 1.137(a)(3). Decisions on reviving abandoned applications have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable. Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (Comm'r Pat. 1887) (the term "unavoidable" is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business."); In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (D.C. Cir. 1912); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (Comm'r Pat. 1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a "case by case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account." Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). A petition to revive an application as unavoidably abandoned cannot be granted where petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing the cause of the unavoidable delay. Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 5 USPQ2D 1130 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

The showing of record is inadequate to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 133 and 37 CFR 1.137(a).² Specifically, an application is "unavoidably" abandoned only where petitioner, or counsel for petitioner, takes all action necessary for a proper response to the outstanding Office action, but through the intervention of unforeseen circumstances, such as failure of mail, telegraph, facsimile, or the negligence of otherwise reliable employees, the response is not timely received in the Office.³

Petitioner asserts the application was unavoidably delayed because in response to a Notice of Non-Compliance petitioner called Examiner Tran on March 11, 2003 and informed the Examiner he believed the Notice of Non-Compliance was mailed in error. Petitioner states that Examiner Tran agreed to review all the claims to see if a restriction was still required. Petitioner contends Examiner Tran stated if he determined that a restriction was not required, an Office Action on all the claims would be issued. Petitioner argues that based upon the phone call with Examiner Tran he did not believe that he needed to respond to the February 21, 2003 Office Action. Petitioner's arguments have been considered but they are not persuasive. A "reasonably prudent person" would file papers or fees in compliance with 37 CFR 1.8 or 1.10 to ensure their timely filing in the USPTO, as well as preserve adequate evidence of such filing, a delay caused by an applicant's failure to file papers or fees in compliance with 37 CFR 1.8 and 1.10 does not constitute "unavoidable" delay. See

¹ In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

² See MPEP 711(c)(III)(c)(2) for a discussion of the requirements for a showing of unavoidable delay.

³ Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31 (Comm'r Pat. 1887).

Krahn, 15 USPQ2d at 1825.

Petitioner's reliance upon a conversation with Examiner Tran is not convincing because a delay caused by an applicant's lack of knowledge or improper application of the patent statute, rules of practice or the MPEP is not rendered "unavoidable" due to: (A) the applicant's reliance upon oral advice from USPTO employees; or (B) the USPTO's failure to advise the applicant of any deficiency in sufficient time to permit the applicant to take corrective action. See *In re Sivertz*, 227 USPQ 255, 256 (Comm'r Pat. 1985).

Further, pursuant to 37 CFR 1.2, all business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.

Accordingly, petitioner has failed to provide sufficient arguments that warrant the finding of unavoidable delay within the meaning of 37 CFR 1.137(a).

Alternative Venue

Petitioner may wish to consider filing a petition to revive based on unintentional abandonment under 37 CFR 1.137(b). A grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.137(b) must be accompanied by the required reply, the required petition fee, and a statement that the **entire** delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.137(b) was unintentional.

The filing of a petition under 37 C.F.R. § 1.137(b) cannot be intentionally delayed, and therefore, must be filed promptly. A person seeking revival due to unintentional delay cannot make a statement that the delay was unintentional unless the entire delay, including the delay from the date it was discovered that the application was abandoned until the filing of the petition to revive under 37 C.F.R. § 1.137(b), was unintentional. A statement that the delay was unintentional is not appropriate if petitioner intentionally delayed the filing of a petition for revival under 37 C.F.R. § 1.137(b).

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: **Mail Stop Petition**
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By facsimile: (703) 872-9306

By delivery service: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
(FedEx, UPS, DHL, etc.) Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone inquiries should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3215.

Charlema R. Grant
Petitions Attorney
Office of Petitions